

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Final Office Action dated May 6, 2005. Claims 1 to 18 are pending in the application, with Claims 16 to 18 having been added. Claims 1, 5, 7, 11, 13 and 14, all of which are independent, have been amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 3, 5, 7 to 9 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,378,887 (Kobayashi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,729,550 (Seita); Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,631,848 (Gaultier) in view of Seita; and Claims 4, 6, 10, 12 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kobayashi in view of Seita and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,724,103 (Parraut). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 1 as amended is directed to a non-contact communication card. The card includes a communication component which communicates information in a non-contact state, and a time designation component which designates a communication permission time period, the communication permission time period being set by a user of the card. The card also includes a communication control component which determines, upon receiving a communication request, whether or not the communication permission time period designated by the time designation component has been reached, permits communication by the communication component when determining that the communication permission time period has been reached, and prohibits communication by the communication component when determining that the communication permission time period has not been reached.

In a similar manner, independent Claims 7 and 13 as amended are respectively directed to a method and a computer program.

A feature of the invention of Claims 1, 7 and 13 therefore lies in determining whether a communication permission time period set by a user has been reached, and permitting communication by a communication component when it is determined that the communication permission time period has been reached. By virtue of this feature, in which communication is permitted based upon a determination that a communication permission time period set by a user has been reached, unintentional communication of information is reduced and the likelihood of information stealing is decreased.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention of the subject application. In particular, Kobayashi, Seita, Gaultier and Parrault are not seen to disclose or suggest at least the feature of determining whether a communication permission time period set by a user has been reached, and permitting communication by a communication component when it is determined that the communication permission time period has been reached.

As understood by Applicant, Kobayashi discloses a non-contact type IC card in which a re-access inhibition time setting circuit sets a re-access inhibition period of time for inhibiting re-access for a fixed period of time after an operation of a main circuit is finished. This is said to prevent a double write operation of history in the card due to re-access in a short period of time. See Kobayashi, Abstract; and column 2, line 64 to column 3, line 11.

However, Kobayashi is not seen to disclose or suggest that a determination is made as to whether a communication permission time period set by a user has been reached, and that communication is permitted by a communication component when it is determined that the communication permission time period has been reached. In Kobayashi, it is the finishing of an operation of a main circuit which determines when the time period begins. This is different than the present invention, in which permission of communication by a communication component is seen to begin when a communication permission time period has been reached.

As understood by Applicant, Gaultier discloses a method of controlling an electronic circuit. A command is received from a control unit, and is interpreted in either a first manner, if the command is followed by a predetermined dead time, or in a second manner, if a new command is transmitted before expiration of the predetermined dead time. See Gaultier, Abstract; and column 5, lines 26 to 31.

However, Gaultier is also not seen to disclose or suggest that a determination is made as to whether a communication permission time period set by a user has been reached, and that communication is permitted by a communication component when it is determined that the communication permission time period has been reached. In Gaultier, it is the reception of a command from a control unit which triggers the beginning of the predetermined dead time. The present invention, on the other hand, permits communication by a communication component when it is determined that a communication permission time period has been reached.

In addition to the foregoing deficiencies, the Office Action acknowledges that Kobayashi and Gaultier do not disclose or suggest that a communication permission time period is set by a user.

Seita was cited for its alleged disclosure of a unit in which a user can change and set a predetermined period of time. As understood by Applicant, Seita discloses that a password required for utilizing an IC card function is registered, so that a "key" is locked with regard to the IC card function. In order to unlock the key, a user must input a password that matches the registered password. After the IC card function is enabled for use or utilization, and after a predetermined period of time is elapsed, the enabled status is automatically returned back to the disabled status. The predetermined period of time can be set by a user. See Seita, column 2, lines 13 to 45.

Although Seita may be seen to disclose that a user can set a predetermined period of time for disabling an IC card function, it is not seen to disclose or suggest that a determination is made as to whether a communication permission time period has been reached, and that communication is permitted by a communication component when it is determined that the communication permission time period has been reached. In Seita, it is the entry of a correct password that is seen to enable an IC card function. The predetermined period of time in Seita is merely seen to disable an IC card function that has already been enabled. In contrast, the present invention permits communication when it is determined that a communication permission time period has been reached.

Accordingly, Seita is not seen to disclose or suggest determining whether a communication permission time period set by a user has been reached, and permitting

communication by a communication component when it is determined that the communication permission time period has been reached.

As such, even if Kobayashi or Gaultier are combined with Seita in the manner proposed in the Office Action (assuming for argument's sake that such combination would be permissible), the result would not teach at least the feature of determining whether a communication permission time period set by a user has been reached, and permitting communication by a communication component when it is determined that the communication permission time period has been reached.

In addition, Parrault has been reviewed and are not seen to compensate for the deficiencies of Kobayashi, Gaultier and Seita.

Allowance of Claims 1, 7 and 13 is therefore respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 5 as amended is directed to a non-contact communication card. The card includes a communication component which communicates information in a non-contact state, and a designation component which designates permission/prohibition of communication, the permission/prohibition of communication being set by a user of the card. The card also includes a communication control component which prohibits communication of highly confidential information by the communication component and permits communication of information with low confidentiality by the communication component when prohibition of communication is designated by the designation component.

In a similar manner, independent Claims 11 and 14 as amended are directed to a method and a computer program.

A feature of the invention of Claims 5, 11 and 14 therefore lies in, in a case where prohibition of communication is set by a user, prohibiting communication of highly confidential information by a communication component and permitting communication of information with low confidentiality by the communication component. The applied references of Kobayashi, Seita, Gaultier and Parrault are not seen to disclose or suggest at least this feature.

As noted above, Kobayashi is seen to disclose a non-contact type IC card in which a re-access inhibition time setting circuit sets a re-access inhibition period of time for inhibiting re-access for a fixed period of time after an operation of a main circuit is finished. However, Kobayashi is not seen to disclose or suggest that, in a case where prohibition of communication is set by a user, communication of highly confidential information is prohibited by a communication component, and that communication of information with low confidentiality is permitted by the communication component.

Also as noted above, Gaultier discloses a method of controlling an electronic circuit in which a command is received from a control unit, and is interpreted in either a first or second manner, depending upon whether the command is followed by a predetermined dead time. However, nothing in Gaultier is seen to disclose or suggest that, in a case where prohibition of communication is set by a user, communication of highly confidential information is prohibited by a communication component, and that communication of information with low confidentiality is permitted by the communication component.

In addition, Seita and Parrault have been reviewed and are not seen to compensate for the deficiencies of Kobayashi and Gaultier.

Allowance of Claims 5, 11 and 14 is therefore respectfully requested.

Accordingly, based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1, 5, 7, 11, 13 and 14 are believed to be allowable over the applied references.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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